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Human rights questions: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Letter dated 25 October 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to attach information regarding the cooperation of Belarus in the field of promotion and protection of human rights (see annex). I would appreciate it if you could circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 71 (b).

(*Signed*) Andrei **Dapkiunas**

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Annex to the letter dated 25 October 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

International cooperation by the Republic of Belarus in the defence of human rights

For the promotion and defence of human rights, Belarus advocates constructive international cooperation based on the principles of mutual respect and partnership with equal rights.

In order to fulfil its international human rights obligations, the Government of Belarus takes advantage both of its national potential and of opportunities for cooperation with the international mechanisms for the defence of human rights.

Belarus participates in good faith in all the major international human rights treaties. In 2004, it ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, thus recognizing the competence of the Committee to consider communications submitted by individuals.

Belarus participates actively as regards the special procedures mandates of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. At the invitation of the Government of Belarus, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, A. Hussein, visited Belarus in 1997. The recommendations made in his report were taken into account by Belarus when amending the Media Act. The Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, P. Cumaraswamy, visited the country in 2000.

In 2004, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention of the Commission on Human Rights visited Belarus at the invitation of the Government. It noted the high level of cooperation with the Government during its visit, as well as the efforts made by the authorities to improve the judicial system and legislation, and said that the situation regarding the right of asylum in Belarus was one of the best in the world, compared with the situation in other countries.

Belarus is continuing its constructive cooperation with regard to the special procedures mandates of the Commission on Human Rights and is considering the possibility of inviting some of the holders of such mandates to visit Belarus.

The Government of Belarus is cooperating productively with the Minsk Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. In 2003-2004, 21 projects were carried out within the context of this cooperation, and in 2005 coordination with the Office made it possible to develop 10 additional projects. These projects cover various areas, in particular human rights education, reform of the penalty application regime and assistance for the promotion of dialogue between religions and religious pluralism.